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NEWS RELEASE

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FLATHEAD LAKE BIOLOGICAL STATION RECEIVES \$1.5 MILLION

MISSOULA-

The McKnight Foundation of Minneapolis has committed \$1.5 million to endow a professorship in limnology research at The University of Montana's Flathead Lake Biological Station.

By requiring a \$1 million match from other private sources, the McKnight grant provides the platform for a \$2.5 million endowed chair. The faculty position will facilitate expanded work in river and wetland ecology.

The biological station, the nation's second-oldest freshwater research facility, has attracted international attention in the scientific community for its work on lake water quality and vitality, using one of the western United States' most pristine bodies of water as a laboratory.

The limnology professorship is the second such academic position at the station, after the Bierman Professorship in Ecology, established in 1986.

As he expressed thanks on behalf of UM, President George Dennison called the McKnight grant "highly significant to enhance the University's position in this region as a leader in scientific discovery.

"With the University situated at the edge of the Flathead Basin, the Biological Station is a

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natural site for limnological research that has international implication," Dennison said. "This grant put us in a wonderful position to complete the effort on behalf of the station and we appreciate it very much."

* The McKnight Foundation was created in 1953 by William L. McKnight, one of the founders of the 3M Company, and his wife, Maude. It awards grants chiefly in Minnesota, except for environmental, research and applied science and international programs.

The grant gives a major boost to the biological station's fund-raising efforts, which call for the endowment of several faculty research positions and the construction and renovation of new and existing space to accommodate the new scientists and their graduate and post-graduate research assistants.

Other plans call for the construction of a multimedia center and lecture hall providing linkage to the outside scientific world via advanced Internet- and satellite-based communications. Visitors will experience real-life representations of the station's research and education programs through a new interpretive center and self-guided tours of nearby forests and shoreline.

The station also has placed a high priority on endowing the Flathead Lake Research and Monitoring Fund, which will provide resources for continuing long-term data collection. Observing changes in the quality of Flathead Lake over time assists local policymakers in determining how best to stem potential negative effects of human impacts on Flathead Lake. A \$20,000 contribution by the Flathead Lake Protection Association -- a group of local residents -- initiated the monitoring fund earlier this summer.

The biological station, now in its second century, was founded in 1899 by Morton Elrod, UM's first professor of biology.

"It is most gratifying that the McKnight Foundation has recognized that the biological station, situated at the Crown of the Continent, and its water-related research programs, mesh well with the Foundation's long-standing interest in the Mississippi River Basin," said Jack Stanford, station director and Bierman Professor of Ecology.

Stanford hopes others -- particularly those who are directly affected by changing lake and river ecology -- will partner with the station to increase the body of scientific knowledge about water quality.

"The McKnight grant is the catalyst we need to move our fund-raising forward to the point that the Flathead Lake Biological Station may be assured of a state-of-the-art faculty to conduct the strategic research and education needed to sustain the goods and services provided by ecosystems here in Montana and around the world," Stanford said.

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